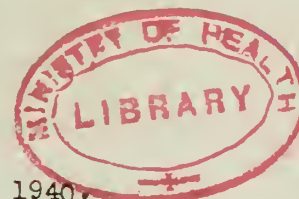


KNIGHTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILMedical Officer's Report for 1940.

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit an abbreviated report for 1940.

vital statistics

Adjusted statistics from the Ministry of Health are not available but it can be stated that during the year the population of the town was increased by approximately 25 per cent, owing to the influx of residents from large towns - chiefly women and children - who had come for refuge from air raids. Mention will be made in next year's Report of a further 25 per cent increase, made up of factory workers and their families and of unaccompanied evacuee children.

Nursing

Owing to the above conditions the District Nurses had difficulty in meeting the requirements of the population and extra unqualified help had to be obtained. There is no hesitation in saying that, with the further increase in population, the nursing facilities will be inadequate this coming winter.

Laboratories

The Emergency Public Health Laboratories are excellent, and, so far as this town is concerned, an improvement on pre-war conditions.

Legislation in force

In addition to that stated in previous Reports to be in force, new Building Bye-Laws were approved by the Minister of Health on the 21st September 1939 and are now in force.

Hospitals

It is satisfactory to note that more use is being made of the Knighton Union Hospital for cases where home conditions are unsuitable for the treatment of prolonged illness.

Ambulance Facilities

Up to the present, we have managed without an ambulance but, owing to (i) petrol shortage (ii) Poor train service and (iii) Increased population, some provision will have to be made for the transport of hospital cases. Trailer ambulances can be obtained or improvised at small cost. They do not need much upkeep and can be towed by small cars.

Water

There was no change in the situation in 1940 - the town supply was known to be unsatisfactory and boiling was advised for domestic purposes. I am pleased to report that at the time of writing a chlorinator has been installed and has been in use for a few days. Up to the moment there has not been time to see if it is satisfactory. It is necessary to point out here that this single chlorinator does not treat water for part of Presteigne Road and the whole of Ludlow Road for which other

arrangements must be made. Again, alterations to the source and surrounding area are urgently required and this work should be put in hand without delay. The Council are considering a Report dealing with this subject received from the consulting engineer to The Birmingham Corporation Water Works.

Factories

The works have been inspected and conditions are satisfactory. Lavatory and washing accommodation are adequate and modern devices in the shape of fume extractors, protective clothing etc, to protect employees, are provided and used. The workshops are well-lighted and ventilated.

Schools

An extra building has been utilised for some of the evacuee children. It is not good, in my opinion, but the best we can provide under the circumstances.

Overcrowding

This is acute - instances have been brought to my notice of workers using the same beds in two shifts day and night - and occupation of one room by a family is common. Some attempt has been made to deal with this problem by taking over an hotel and a block of temporary houses is in course of construction.

Nutrition

A few children and older people suffered from fruit shortage during the winter and I saw one or two cases of subclinical scurvy, which responded promptly to Vitamin C. This state of affairs is quite unnecessary as supplies of synthetic Vitamin C are readily available and cheap. The National loaf does not appear to be on sale, whether there is no demand or shortage of supply I am unable to say, but it is said to contain most of the necessary Vitamins.

Control over Infectious Disease

In these times of overcrowding and close contact amongst children, it should be urged on local authorities to co-operate with local medical practitioners and, when requested, to remove cases of infectious disease to hospital promptly and without argument. There has been no complaint in this respect with regard to our own Council. There has been a splendid response to the drive to immunise children against Diphtheria and parents co-operated willingly. The immunisation was done during the Spring and early Summer of 1941 but is mentioned here as it is a matter of concern to the Council to know it has been carried out.

Infectious Diseases

There were no new notifications of Tuberculosis in 1940. Of other infectious diseases, the following were notified: Diphtheria 2; Pneumonia 2; Scarlet Fever 1; Erysipelas 1; Measles 2; Whooping Cough 1.

As will be seen, there are several matters which require attention but, bearing in mind the strain on our public services, the population have maintained their health remarkably well.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

(signed) G.H.H. BOOTH